



## The Chairman's Corner

by

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### THE STALL BRIDGE

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Earlier this year, in June, NYS Department of Transportation performed an updated inspection on the Stall Bridge – a county bridge dating to 1909 -- spanning the Roeliff Jansen Kill between the towns of Clermont and Livingston.

The bridge had been limited to five tons since roughly 2011. A single-lane steel truss bridge with an open steel deal just over 96 feet in length, the Stall Bridge was placed on the county's bridge replacement list several years ago based on its age and condition.

This June, Columbia County Commissioner of Public Works Ray Jurkowski explained, DOT identified multiple structural issues and determined the bridge be immediately red flagged, indicating imminent danger, and closed to all traffic, including autos, bicycles, and pedestrians. The immediate impact was to cause an approximate 10-mile traffic detour.

Let's go back a bit over a year ago to June 2021, when state DOT conducted its regular biannual inspection of the Stall Bridge. The DOT report at that time indicated one yellow flag, or issue, which was subsequently addressed by the county.

With the passage of another year, things had clearly deteriorated in terms of the bridge's structural integrity. The 2021 issue and repair had nothing to do with the 2022 report, according to state DOT. These are in entirely new areas of concern that have been identified.

"This is an example where -- within one year -- it can happen fairly quickly as far as the deterioration goes, where areas that were not previously identified as being significant issues now all of a sudden become a critical item that needs to be addressed immediately," Commissioner Jurkowski said, adding it underscores the need for the continuous attention that gets paid to county infrastructure.

The Board of Supervisors' Public Works Committee, chaired by Stuyvesant town supervisor Ron Knott, has been working on a solution to the Stall Bridge problem.

It's now believed one is in sight.

The question remains whether that solution amounts to a complete replacement or significant rehabilitation in what Commissioner Jurkowski calls, no matter the ultimate answer, an "aggressive and optimistic time frame."

In terms of the permitting process, the state's Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) are clearly two of the agencies that would be involved, SHPO because of the age of the structure and DEC owing to the Roeliff Jansen Kill's status as a trout stream.

The Public Works Committee is now in the process of soliciting consultants, with the idea that one can be on board in October. The consultant would assist with the determination of whether the current structure undergoes rehabilitation, or if the full replacement is necessary.

Whatever direction that goes, said Commissioner Jurkowski, the plan is to use the existing bridge abutments. Further, the current width of the roadway is about 10 feet – if a replacement is needed, that would provide the opportunity to some widening to help allow for the safe passage of farm implements and emergency vehicles. Regardless, it would remain a one-lane bridge.

Under the aggressive and optimistic time frame, the hope would be to have construction underway by the latter part of 2023 and the bridge reopened in 2024.